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DEDICATED TO CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The Department of Pediatrics consists of a dynamic and growing faculty dedicated to the highest quality patient care, research, and educational activity devoted to improving the health of Florida's children. This department is uniquely balanced, with almost exactly half of its budget derived from clinical activity and the other half from funded research.

The department's excellence in education is attested to by our having been awarded the prestigious Golden Apple Teaching Award by the graduating medical students three out of the last six years. It is truly unusual for one faculty to excel in all three areas, but our faculty has done precisely that.

UF AUTISM RESEARCHER RECEIVES \$1.1 MILLION IN NIH FUNDING

August 22, 2005

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — A University of Florida autism researcher whose program focuses on the in-home training of fathers to better communicate and play with their autistic children recently received \$1.1 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health.

Jennifer Elder, an associate professor and department chair in the UF College of Nursing, will lead a four-year study that will expand training to help fathers learn to communicate more effectively with their autistic children. Autism is a developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is characterized by problems interacting and communicating with others.



Elder's previous study found that teaching fathers how to talk to and play with their autistic children in a home setting improved communication, increased the number of intelligible words the youngsters spoke by more than 50 percent and helped fathers get more involved in their care.

Tracy Brown Wright, tracyb@nursing.ufl.edu, (352) 273-6421

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Dr. Fennell to receive major national award

Dr. Robert S. Fennell, Professor and Chief of Pediatric Nephrology at the University of Florida, is the 2007 awardee of the Medal of Excellence by the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP). The AAKP is a national patient-based organization geared towards helping individuals with kidney disease. The annual Medal of Excellence is awarded competitively by the AAKP Medical Advisory Board to a nephrologist who has demonstrated outstanding clinical care and service to patients and has been an outstanding teacher to trainees. Dr. Fennell, who retires this summer after 35 years as a faculty member at UF and Shands Hospital, has served as the Medical Director of the Pediatric Kidney Transplant program since 1974 and the Medical Director of the Pediatric Dialysis unit since 1975. He has authored over 100 peer-reviewed publications, been listed among the Best Doctors in America and won the Best Faculty Teacher award from the residents in 1986-87 and 1992-93. He is the first pediatric nephrologist to be selected for this prestigious honor. He will receive the award at a special AAKP Medal of Excellence Dinner on March 11th, 2007 in Baltimore Maryland.


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During the past years, we have witnessed continued growth and expansion of our clinical, education, research, and service missions, working in coordination with the strategic goals of the University of Florida. Our department has been central to several of the top priorities for the university-wide strategic plan including, neurosciences, genetics, cancer, and children/family issues.

In **education**, the Department of Pediatrics at UF has attracted UF medical students to the field of pediatrics at twice the national rate. We have provided outstanding training to pediatric residents, whose average scores for board certification are more than 100 points above the national average.

In **patient care**, the Department of Pediatrics has established the Shands Children's Hospital as a hospital within a hospital on the Shands UF campus. We have accomplished numerous clinical firsts, including being the first to performed pediatric heart and lung transplants in this state, the first to bring cutting edge nitric oxide therapy into use in respiratory failure, the first to transplant umbilical cord blood stem cells for patients with leukemia and primary immune deficiency.

In **research**, the Department of Pediatrics has increased its rate of nationally competitive funding from the National Institutes of Health by tenfold over the past ten years, including research in areas as diverse as HIV/AIDS research, epilepsy and seizure prediction, gene therapy for heart failure and lung disease, genetic obesity syndromes, juvenile diabetes, prenatal and postnatal nutrition, and nerve cell tumors.

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NEW UF CHILDREN'S HEART CENTER AT HEART OF CARE FOR CONGENITAL CARDIAC CONDITIONS**Melanie Fridl Ross**

10/20/2005

UF surgeons and pediatric cardiologists have joined forces to establish the UF Children's Heart Center, a move officials say will improve care for both children and adults born with complex cardiac conditions.

The center will provide coordinated care to patients with congenital heart disease at UF - from diagnosis to treatments that incorporate medical and surgical management and follow-up.

With more than \$3 million in funding from Shands at UF, the UF College of Medicine and Children's Medical Services, the center represents a major new investment in pediatric cardiology and congenital heart surgery programs and unites the expertise of specialists in pediatric cardiology, invasive electrophysiology, cardiac imaging and interventional procedures, heart transplantation, congenital heart surgery, nursing and more.



Cardiac surgeon Mark Bleiweis, M.D., former director of the Children's Heart Institute at the Children's Hospital of Orange County in California, is heading the center.

"Our center will be able to provide care for the entire spectrum of congenital heart disease, from the smallest premature newborn to the adult with congenital heart disease, which would include complete repair of very complex heart problems to heart transplantation if necessary," Bleiweis said.

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